development is as follows: (i) At Rajamunday Airport construction of new terminal building at a cost of Rs.43.29 crore to handle 150 passengers in peak hours is in progress and work will be completed by March, 2010, Night landing facility at a cost of 1.92 crore will be available by December, 2009. (ii) At Tirupati Airport resurfacing and strengthening of the existing runway, taxi track, apron, isolation bay etc, are completed at a cost of Rs.17,30 crore. Extension of existing runway & strengthening of runway could not be taken up due to non availability of land. Estimate for construction of new integrated terminal building at a cost of Rs.132,00 crore is under progress and construction of building will be completed by July, 2011. Night landing facilities have been available since 2007.

Functioning of private airports

2573. SHRI P. RAJEEVE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) how many private-owned airports are functioning in India;

(b) whether the Airports Authority of India has any control on these airports;

(c) the agency which monitors the security arrangements in these private airports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) There sire six airports owned by private companies and licensed under the 'Public Use, category and used for scheduled flight operations.

There are 18 privately owned airports which are licensed under the private category and used by the licence holders and by the individuals specifically authorised by the licensee. All these airports are operational and functioning,

(b) Airports Authority of India provides Air Traffic Services at aerodromes licensed under public use category and used for scheduled flight operations.

(c) The security at all aerodromes is regulated under the guidelines issued by Bureau of Civil Aviation Security.

Greenfield airports in Sikkim

2574. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a Greenfield airport in Pakyong in Sikkim was approved by the Cabinet in October, 2008;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the Airports Authority of India has awarded the contract to build the airport within 24 months; and

(c) if so, the details of the progress made towards the construction of the airport so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The construction of runway and apron works have been awarded for an amount of Rs. 264.29 crores with a target of completion of this work within 24 months. However, the entire project is likely to be completed within 36 months. The manpower and machinery have beem mobilised for this project and earfh excavation/ filling is in progress. The work is likely to pickup once the removal of the present encumbrances like shifting of rural water pipelines crossing the airport project site, felling and removal of trees, shifting of electricity transmission lines, diversion of Dikling road, relocation of Chortens/ Devisthan from the project land, removal of unauthorised construction around airport boundry and construction of CC footpath upto Dikling School is completed by the State Government.

Committee on merger of Indian Airlines and Air India

2575. SHRI KRISHAN LAL BALMIKI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether any Committee was constituted before the merger of Indian Airlines and Air India to review the same; and

(b) if so, the details of the report submitted by the Committee?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A presentation was made by the Ministry of Civil Aviation before the Prime Minister in March, 2006 when an "in principle" view was taken that the merger of the two airlines would be in their best interest. Pursuant to this, the Prime Minister constituted a Group of Ministers to consider the proposal at pre-Cabinet stage so that a consensus could emerge on various issues before the matter was placed for Cabinet approval. Accordingly, a Group of Ministers was constituted under the Chairmanship of former Minister of External Affairs. Simultaneously, it was decided that the matter should first be considered by a Committee of Secretaries. Accordingly, a Committee of Secretaries consisting of the Secretaries of the Ministry of Civil Aviation, Department of Legal Affairs, Department of Public Enterprises, Department of Revenue, Department of Personnel & Training and Department of Company Affairs was constituted under the Chairmanship of Cabinet Secretary.

The Committee of Secretaries as well as the Group of Ministers after considering the matter felt that the proposal to merge the two airlines is in their best operational and financial interest and decided to recommend to the Cabinet that the proposal to merge Air India and Indian Airlines into a new merged entity may be approved.

Agreement between Kingfisher and Indian Airlines

2576. SHRI KRISHAN LAL BALMIKI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the ground handling operation of Kingfisher Airlines was handled by Indian Airlines under an agreement from 2005 to 2007;

(b) the amount of handling charges during the said period; and

---

Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.